

## Weighting FAQs

### Compilation of Questions from Geographic Area Briefings

NO.	FPA SUBJECT AREA	ANSWER BY	QUESTION / COMMENT ANSWERS
1.	Weight	Core Team	<p>FMU Weight vs. constraint. Future desired condition class may exclude fire or fire use due to T&amp;E species – so is this a constraint or a weight?</p> <p><b>- Neither. The user will designate each FMU as to whether fire use is allowed per the local fire management plan. If fire use is not allowed in that FMU, then only a suppression weight would be required by the system, and the system would not manage any ignitions for fire use in that FMU.</b></p>
2.	Weights	ICG	<p>Who sets the weights for values protected?</p> <p><b>- Weights are set by the local staffs through a negotiation with partners. A formal process is being developed so all users will be considering weights in the same context.</b></p>
3.	Weights	Core Team	<p>What are the sideboards on relative weighting and competition between FPU.</p> <p><b>- A formal process is being developed so all users will be considering weights in the same context.</b></p>
4.	Weights	Core Team	<p>How are weights related to potential fire impacts? Does a greater loss (upon burning) equal a higher weight?</p> <p><b>- Generally weights reflect the relative importance of preventing fire damage in the case of suppression, or the relative importance of promoting fire in the case of fire use.</b></p> <p>If so, how can the same weighting table be used for both IA and WFU strategies?</p> <p><b>- There can be separate weights for each type of event (IA and WFU) for the same FMU, Sensitivity Period, and Fire Intensity Level.</b></p> <p>Isn't WFU employed when benefits are derived (upon burning) or at least when losses are fewer/less than would be incurred using an IA strategy? Wouldn't this suggest a weighting value = 0 or even negative?</p> <p><b>- For making decisions between fire use and IA fire events that may compete for resources and budget, using the same scale is necessary. The system will know what kind of fire it is managing (IA or fire use) and will multiply the weight times the acres appropriately, with fire use acres considered beneficial and initial attack acres considered detrimental.</b></p>



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5.	Weights	ICG & Core Team	<p>The current process of prioritizing incidents at PL 4 and 5 uses, among other things, the WFSA – one element of which “weighs” dollar values of resources at risk. Will this be at odds with the FPA process?</p> <p><b>-There are ongoing discussions between the FPA and WFSA teams to ensure future integration of the two systems.</b></p> <p><b>- Remember that there are aspects of the WFSA implementation that are agency specific, i.e. not all agencies use ‘dollar value’ in considering resources at risk (some use a system of ‘+’ and ‘-’ to indicate importance).</b></p> <p><b>- Further, the WFSA develops options for tactical implementation; FPA is a broadly based strategic planning tool and was not specifically designed to address tactical issues.</b></p>
6.	Weights	Core Team	<p>“Resource values as relative weights; not dollars” – so how is relative weight to be determined – how do we give the numbers to resources?</p> <p><b>- A formal process is being developed so all users will be considering weights in the same context. One process being discussed is the ‘analytical hierarchy process’ or AHP. AHP is a well accepted and well documented process. The outcome is a consistent process for weights for each FPU.</b></p>
7.	Weights	Core Team	<p>When you are establishing the FMU weights, isn’t the system going to be inherently biased toward WUI? i.e., how can T&amp;E ever be higher than WUI? Realistically.</p> <p><b>- Weights are locally assigned. If local management planning indicates that T&amp;E habitat is more important than WUI, that should be reflected in the weights.</b></p>
8.	Weights	Core Team	<p>What is integration scheduling?</p> <p><b>- [Not sure what this refers to]</b></p> <p>Resource value as relative weights – not dollars. Relative to what, if not dollars?</p> <p><b>- Relative to the importance of managing competing fire events in the FPU within the same budget and fire resource limitations.</b></p>



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9.	Weights	Core Team	<p>Are there business rules for how to “weigh” FMU? If no rules, units will try to place 10’s on everything. I.e., no more than 30% of entries should be weighted 10. Need to range from 1-10.</p> <p><b>- A formal process is being developed so all users will be considering weights in the same context.</b></p> <p><b>- As an aside, if one FPU rated all their FMUs as ‘10s’, the system would actually see them all as ‘1s’ since it looks at relative value. If they are all equal (e.g. 10s) it would not differentiate between fire events except to manage those which are fastest, easiest, and cheapest to deal with within the budget constraint.</b></p>
10	Weights	Core Team	<p>Weights between agencies are often a matter of perspective. How do you resolve argument of weight in areas such as forested areas vs. cheat grass?</p> <p><b>- A formal process is being developed so all users will be considering weights in the same context. Weights should be able to reflect unique agency mission and priorities and minimize conflict between agencies. It will be important for line officers/agency administrators to be engaged with the fire planning process, they will need to confirm or approve that the relative weighting for all the admin. units in an FPU are appropriate.</b></p>
11	Weights	Core Team & ICG	<p>In the fire report system (DI 1202) net value change is a required element, when will this system change, since no longer have net value change?</p> <p><b>- Entering net value change on the DI-1202 is an agency-specific requirement. The FPA-PM system will not calculate a net value change (NVC) so if that information is still required per agency guidelines, another way will need to be determined to calculate NVC. Or the DOI-1202 will be changed.</b></p> <p>When will we get the weights guidance?</p> <p><b>- The process is under development as of March 2004, and should be available no later than Fall 2004.</b></p> <p>What will be the 10 weighted items?</p> <p><b>- There will not be a set of weighted items. The weights will represent the relative importance of managing one fire event over another one – given limited resources.</b></p> <p>I thought you said there would be national standards that would be prioritized within a unit?</p> <p><b>- This has never been the intent of FPA. Each unit has unique values and priorities that FPA is intended to reflect, not dictate.</b></p>



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12	Weights	Core Team	<p>Given the emphasis on controlling cost of large fires, and the fact that most agencies have to provide an economic value of resources protection, how will weights give economic benefit information if NVC goes away?</p> <p><b>- If protecting high dollar value resources is a priority at the local unit, assigning higher weights will reflect that priority. Economic valuation has never been a very accurate way to assign value to wilderness, recreation, T&amp;E species and others. Considering ‘importance’ in place of dollar value is a more even-handed way to reflect the direction and priorities contained in land management plans.</b></p> <p>WFSA etc. are based on an economic benefit provided by the cost of suppression, how will weighting address this or will the system be able to?</p> <p><b>- This has yet to be determined. WFSA is undergoing a review, and part of that review is considering the relationship between WFSA and FPA-PM. It is possible that the WFSA will access the FPA-PM weights in lieu of economic value, but that is far from decided at this early stage. More to come.</b></p>
13	Weights	Core Team	<p>As we look at weighting values/weights when considering FMUs within FPU, how are geographical areas weighted against each other?</p> <p><b>- FPUs are not weighted, nor are they weighted against each other. Comparisons between FPUs used for budget allocation will use a more sophisticated routine that involves comparison of the slope of the ‘effectiveness frontier’ generated by FPA-PM.</b></p> <p>Are there or will there be any worksheets/guidance to assist with determining weighting values.</p> <p><b>- Tools to help with the weighting process are being developed; as is how this potentially large data array will be imported into the system user interface.</b></p>



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14	Weights	Core Team	<p>Are relative weights of resource values determined locally or at national level?</p> <p>- <b>Weights are determined at the local FPU level.</b></p> <p>Re: NVC (net value change) – What does “non-monetized cost effectiveness analysis” mean?</p> <p>- <b>The FPA-PM is a “non-monetized analysis” in that it doesn’t attempt to place a dollar value on resources that – by-and-large - are difficult to assess in that context (e.g. historic sites, wilderness values, ecological integrity, future commodity values). Instead, the system uses the concept of ‘relative importance’ in place of dollar value. This provides a ‘common currency’ if you will - that works equally well for all resource values.</b></p> <p>- <b>Non-monetized analysis are nothing new. While the USFS &amp; BLM legacy system (IIAA) was a monetized system using cost plus net value change (NVC), the legacy NPS, FWS, and BIA systems all used a non-monetized form of analysis.</b></p>
15	Weights	Core Team	<p>How is relative importance “weights,” compared between fire planning units? For example, one FPU could establish a high weight for TES habitat, while another weights high for WUI. Are their national weights to take these issues into account?</p> <p>- <b>There are no national weights envisioned.</b></p> <p>- <b>If one unit’s management plan directs them to place TES habitat higher in importance than WUI, and another unit’s management plans stresses WUI above TES, that is okay. The system is intended to link the achievement of locally important management direction and priorities to the unit’s fire program and budget.</b></p> <p>- <b>Comparisons between FPUs used for budget allocation will use a more sophisticated routine that involves comparison of the slope of the ‘effectiveness frontier’ generated by FPA-PM.</b></p>



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16	Weights	Core Team	<p>Would it be (more) appropriate for the affected agency administrators in a given FPU to determine, on an interagency basis, the relative weights for resources? (Rather than asking fire management staff to determine these values.) Would this be done with public preview and comment to confirm the political and social reality of the FPA?</p> <p><b>- We envision that a local interdisciplinary team will perform the weighting process, the line officer(s) would approve the relative weighting, and the fire planner would input them to the system. Individual agency NEPA guidance would determine the need for public review.</b></p>
17	Weights	Core Team	<p>Are weights relative to other values on your agency admin unit or relative to other units within your agency?</p> <p><b>- Weights are relative only to other FMUs within the same fire planning unit (FPU). An FPU may consist of many agencies, and/or multiple instances of a single agency.</b></p>
18	Weights	Core Team	<p>In the fire management planning section, one of the slides indicates the FPA planner assigns weights to FMUs – while in a previous presentation (Incorporating Land Management Objectives and Constraints into FPA) it was very clearly outlined that the line officer “signs off” on the weights. Why is there a difference in the presentations? Which is it? I believe it is more appropriate for the line officer to be the deciding official.</p> <p><b>- There is no conflict between the slides. We envision that an interdisciplinary (and in most cases interagency) team of specialists will perform the weighting process, and the line officer(s) would approve the relative weighting.</b></p>
19	Weights	Core Team	<p>What are the weights on the acres relative to? Within what boundaries?</p> <p><b>- Weights are placed on FMUs and reflect the relative importance within the FPU of managing competing fire events within the same budget and fire resource limitations. An FPU may consist of many agencies, and/or multiple instances of a single agency.</b></p>

